



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lava Beds National
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Lava Beds National Monument News Release

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Lava Beds to Become “Dark Sky Preserve”

For generations, residents of the Klamath Basin have hunted, tilled the soil, and found leisure within this beautiful landscape, and at days end would retire beneath its starry skies. Warm August nights are met with Scorpio’s rise in the south, while Orion’s evening appearance heralds the coming of long winter months. Dark skies and starry nights are a fundamental part of the Basin’s heritage, and with a little care, will continue to grace our nights for years to come.

However, light pollution from poorly designed light fixtures and careless planning can ruin out our view of the night sky. Light pollution is the misdirected scattering of light that blots out the night sky. For example, by looking towards nearby Klamath Falls from the Lava Beds at night, you will see a concentration of light pollution above the city called “skyglow.”

Leading by example, Lava Beds is taking important steps to protect the dark skies of the basin. The Monument, in cooperation with the National Park Service’s Dark Skies Team (DST) and the International Dark Sky Association (IDA), has begun retrofitting outdoor light fixtures within the Monument to reduce light pollution and meet IDA specifications. These goals fall in line with the scenic, wilderness, and energy efficient values the National Park Service strives to meet.

These new light fixtures will decrease light visible from our wilderness areas, reduce the night visibility of park facilities, and preserve night skies. The Monument is also taking the first steps to become a “Dark Sky Preserve”, which is an internationally acknowledged status recognizing the quality of the night sky above the basin. “Dark Sky Preserves” are very popular with stargazers, and will encourage amateur astronomers to visit the Basin and enjoy its stunning starry skies.

For reproducible pictures & maps of the night sky over the Lave Beds, go here:

<http://www.nps.gov/labe/parknews/night-sky-maps-and-images.htm>

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